



# The Dubious Salvation of Jack V.: A Novel

*Jacques Strauss*

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## **The Dubious Salvation of Jack V.: A Novel** Jacques Strauss

Jack Viljee's hometown of Johannesburg is still divided by apartheid, though the old order is starting to crumble. According to eleven-year-old Jack, the world is a rational and simple place. But if life doesn't conform to Jack's expectations, there is always the sympathy and approval of the family's maid to console him. Not that Susie is a pushover. She believes violence, of the nondisfiguring variety, is a healthy form of affection—hence her not infrequent expression “Jack, I love you so much. I will hit you.” Jack himself is not above socking his best friend in the eye or scamming his little sister into picking up the dog mess. The Viljee household, in its small way, mirrors the politics of the country.

This noisy domesticity is upset by the arrival of Susie's fifteen-year-old son. Percy is bored, idle, and full of rage. When Percy catches Jack in an indelibly shameful moment, Jack learns that the smallest act of revenge has consequences beyond his imagining. The world, it turns out, is not so simple.

Subversively smart and unapologetically funny, clever and a little dangerous, *The Dubious Salvation of Jack V.* explores the cost of forgiveness. It is a powerful debut from a fearlessly original voice.

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